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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000926

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2018
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: UN REPORTS DETAIL DEMOLITIONS IN AREA C AND AN
INCREASE IN OBSTACLES TO ACCESS/MOVEMENT

REF: A. JERUSALEM 765
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 900

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: In a study released May 27, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) reported that the GOI demolished more Palestinian structures for lack of permits in West Bank C Areas in the first quarter of 2008 than in all of 2007. The study cites a 94 percent rejection rate for Palestinian building permits in Area C since 2000, and assesses that most Palestinians living in Area C are forced to build illegally. OCHA released a separate update on access and movement noting a "slight deterioration" in the overall access situation and raising the total count of road obstacles from 566 in September 2007 to 607 in April 2008. End summary.

More Demolitions in the First Quarter
of 2008 Than in All 2007

[1](#)2. (C) In a study titled "'Lack of Permit' Demolitions and Resultant Displacement in Area C," released May 27, UN OCHA notes that in the first quarter of 2008, Israeli authorities demolished 124 structures in Area C of the West Bank for lack of permits - more than the total number of demolitions in all of 2007 (107). Most demolitions occurred in the Jordan Valley and near Hebron. OCHA notes displacement of 435 Palestinians as a result of Area C demolitions since 2007, including 135 children. The increasing trend in demolitions has slowed in the second quarter of 2008, with OCHA recording only one demolition thus far.

3,000 Palestinian Structures in Area C
Have Standing Demolition Orders

[1](#)3. (C) OCHA's report highlights the difficult situation faced by growing Palestinian communities in West Bank Area C, noting that there are standing demolition orders on 3,000 Palestinian structures that can be carried out at any time. According to OCHA, "at least ten" villages run the risk of being "entirely displaced," including Khirbat al-Aqabah and Duma (refuels). OCHA assess that over 400 Palestinian towns in the West Bank have built-up segments that extend into Area C, where they are subject to Israeli administrative requirements. Another 130 villages (with 44,000 people) lie entirely in Area C.

94 Percent of Building Permits for
Palestinians Rejected Since 2000

14. (C) According to OCHA, Israeli authorities denied 94 percent of building permit applications from Area C Palestinians between January 2000 and September 2007. During this period, OCHA reports that 5,000 demolition orders were issued and 1,600 of those were carried out. OCHA assesses that many Palestinians are forced to build illegally, risking future demolition.

Obstacles to Movement Increase from 566 to 607

15. (C) In a separate May update on access and movement, OCHA highlighted the increasing number of road obstacles in the West Bank and a "slight deterioration in the overall access situation in the West Bank." The report states that the number of obstacles increased by 41, from 566 to 607, from September 4, 2007 to April 29, 2008. The OCHA report asserts that only five of the 61 obstacles claimed removed by the GOI were significant. OCHA noted some improvement in Palestinians' access to the Dead Sea, slight deterioration in access in the northern and southern West Bank, and significant deterioration in Qalqiliya, where two partial checkpoints controlling access to the city were converted to full checkpoints.

16. (U) The full text of both OCHA reports can be found at <http://www.ochaopt.org/documents>.

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